

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Published under the auspices of the : World Council of Churches · International Missionary Council
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations · World Young Women's Christian Association
World's Student Christian Federation · World Council of Christian Education · United Bible Societies

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No. 46/25th Year 12th December, 1958.

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Atlanta Clergymen Issue Statement on Race Problem

(Atlanta) - More than 300 clergymen in Atlanta, Georgia, have urged state and community leaders to work out a sound public school plan consistent with the US Supreme Court's ruling on integration. The statement, signed by 312 ministers, asked for a citizens' commission to preserve harmony and appealed to churches and synagogues to encourage and promote "a free and intelligent discussion of the issues we confront".

The statement reaffirmed a similar document, signed by 80 Atlanta ministers, a year ago (see EPS No. 44, 1957).

"It is clearer now more than ever", the ministers said, that freedom of speech must be preserved, that the law must be obeyed, that the public school system must be maintained, that hatred and scorn for those of another race can never be justified, that the communication channels between leaders of all races must be kept open and that racial difficulties can be solved "only through prayer and in obedience to the will of God".

Two Atlanta school integration suits are pending in federal courts. Georgia state law calls for the closing of public schools if they are integrated.

The clergymen rejected any suggestion that church property be used as a means of circumventing the school integration ruling of the Supreme Court.

The signers of the statement included Greek Orthodox and Jewish clergymen as well as pastors from sixteen Protestant denominations. There are about 400 Protestant and Orthodox churches and synagogues in Atlanta. The message was not signed by Roman Catholic priests, but Roman Catholic Bishop Francis E. Hyland of Atlanta called it "a splendid and most timely document".

EPS, Geneva

China Recognition Stand Explained

(Chicago) - The Fifth World Order Study Conference last month, which urged US recognition of the Chinese People's Republic, spoke "with a mighty voice" but it spoke only for itself, according to the General Board, governing body of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, sponsor of the conference.

The board, at its meeting on December 3 in Chicago, said that the study conference had "put into public discussion issues of high moral and spiritual, as well as political, significance. The Christian churches of the United States and their councils not only have the right but also the duty to study and comment on issues, no matter how controversial".... The Conference met in November in Cleveland, Ohio. (See EPS No. 45).

But the board restated its rule that pronouncements on specific aspects of international affairs must be developed by departments and divisions of the council if they are adopted by the General Board.

In other comments on the controversial statement, Dr. Herbert S. Mekeel, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, has said that "we are convinced the statement does not represent the true sentiment of masses of members of American churches".

EPS, Geneva

WSCF Conference Scheduled for Rangoon

(Rangoon) - The first in a series of international meetings related to the study of the Life and Mission of the Church and sponsored by the World's Student Christian Federation will be held from December 28 to January 7 in Rangoon, Burma. About 120 representatives of Student Christian Movements from most countries in Asia and from Australia and New Zealand are expected.

Part of an international study programme being carried out by the WSCF during the next five years, the conference will have as its theme, "God's People in God's World". Studies being made by SCMs in various countries will lead up to a World Teaching Conference planned for July 1960, in Europe. The world conference will in turn be preparatory to ten or more regional conferences to follow in 1961-62.

WSCF officials said that the Rangoon conference is an attempt in an international ecumenical study programme, to give Asian Christians "the first word" and explore, from an Asian point of view, the most vital issues facing the Church today.

Major speakers will include Mr. M.M. Thomas of India, Professor Davis McCaughey of Australia, Mr. Paul Verghese of Ethiopia, U Ba Hmin of Burma, the Rev. Harry Daniel of India, U Kyaw Than of Burma, Dr. Notohamidjojo of Indonesia and the Rev. Hans-Ruedi Weber of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

EPS, Geneva

"Golden Rule" Crew Complains of Geneva "Cold Shoulder"

(Geneva) - Members of a group of Christian pacifists who attempted to sail ketches into the H-bomb testing area just before US H-bomb tests in the Pacific last June have complained of a bad reception by major governmental delegations to the Geneva intergovernmental conference on means of halting tests.

The crew members of the "Golden Rule" and the Phoenix" said they were interviewed at some length by important members of the Soviet delegation, but that a press release issued afterwards by the official Tass news agency had "used the visit to exploit their own propaganda" and had attempted to distort the pacifists' real views. "The Russian press release says we came to the interview 'confused about the Russian position' and left 'in entire support'" said the deputation's spokesman, Albert Bigelow, naval officer in World War II, a Quaker and captain of the "Golden Rule".

Mr. Bigelow also objected to being called a "peace fighter" and said that "as a Quaker I am not very happy to be called a fighter at all". His complaint about the Soviet's press report was echoed by Mrs. James Reynolds, wife of the captain of the other vessel, the "Phoenix". Dr. Reynolds is still held in a Honolulu US jail awaiting trial on appeal. His passport has been impounded. "The Soviets represent us as supporting their position, whereas in the Soviet Union such a protest could not succeed at all," she said, referring to the action of the two crews.

The crew members of the "Golden Rule" were arrested in Honolulu before they could sail into the testing area. However, the crew of the "Phoenix" did sail 100 kilometres inside the restricted area before being turned back by the United States Navy.

According to Mr. Bigelow the British and American delegations to the international conference had arranged for only short meetings with junior members of their teams. "We were greatly disappointed at not speaking to the United States delegates on a man to man basis," Mr. Bigelow said. EPS, Geneva

Frankfurt Church Leaders Clash on A-Weapons

(Frankfurt-am-Main) - A clash between Pastor Martin Niemöller, president of the German regional Church of Hessen-Nassau and the chairman of the synod, Dr. Wilhelmi, marked a special synod meeting called to consider the compatibility of atomic arms and the Christian faith.

When Dr. Wilhelmi asked for mutual tolerance between Christians who held different views on the subject, Pastor Niemöller insisted that, on his reading of the New Testament, any stand other than outright rejection of atomic weapons amounted to atheism. Dr. Wilhelmi said this was insulting.

To solve the problem for the time being the synod urged pastors, parish councils and congregations to study the issues, try to arrive at clear convictions and speak out clearly when they were clarified. The statement adopted asks all Christians to act on their conclusions, but without "infringing the law of love" toward those who think differently.

Pastor Niemöller accepted the synod's statement but said he regretted that no real progress had been made. The synod said: "We remain together under the Gospel and are trying to overcome these differences". EPS, Geneva

Hierarchy of the Church of Greece Issues Message

At the end of the thirteenth assembly of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece, meeting in Athens, a message to the Greek people was published in all Greek newspapers on December 4. Sixty bishops attended the month-long sessions. (See EPS No. 41)

The first part of the message speaks of the problems of our time and calls the Greek people to draw inspiration, courage and creative powers from the Orthodox Church and its Hellenic-Christian tradition. The message criticizes the totalitarian political systems of the peoples to the north as well as the governmental forms of the West, on the ground that neither are leading to the establishment of peace in the world. It recommends more attention to the education of youth and suggests that both State and Church should attempt to create a Hellenic-Christian conscience, so that youth may be guided.

In its second part the message speaks of foreign propaganda, which, despite existing state laws, attempts through pamphlets, financial means and distribution of foodstuffs and clothing to draw members from the poorest classes of the Orthodox people. The propaganda is alleged not to care if such activities inflict wounds on the Orthodox conscience and cause disturbance and divisions within the Orthodox Christian family. The Greek people are also told that the Hierarchy has decided to regroup the spiritual forces of the church and combat foreign propagandists by itself undertaking similar works of charity and religious enlightenment.

Speaking of relations between the Church of Greece and the World Council of Churches the Hierarchy says that because the leaders of Protestantism have failed to mention in the basis of the Constitution of the WCC the Holy Trinity, the true Christian God, with the thought to draw in the Anti-Trinitarians, "our church has been led to take a reserved attitude concerning its participation in the conferences of the Protestant ecumenical movement". For this reason, the message goes on, the Hierarchy has decided that participation by the church must not be through clergymen, but only through lay theologians. Their participation in WCC conferences must also be a participation with a limited mandate as long as the Protestant world does not cease its propaganda at the expense of the Orthodox Christian flock.

The message also speaks of a number of internal church matters such as the so-called question of "Palaeo-imerologists" or followers of the Julian calendar, of the wages of the clergy, of the permissibility of fourth marriages and automatic divorce, both of which are rejected, of the relations of the Church of Greece with other Orthodox churches and the need of a panorthodox policy in spiritual activities under the leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, church institutions and church schools, and of the Constitution of the church.

The message also speaks of the book published by Professor P. Trembalas under the title "Royal Priesthood" and informs the Greek people that the author has recognized his error, and that there is only one priesthood, the one transmitted through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The message also advises the clergy and the faithful to abstain from the Rotary organization on the ground that Rotarians do not accept the moral life and charity as fruits of the Christian faith.

General Secretariat of World Council of Churches Comments

A comment on the bishops' message, issued from the General Secretariat of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, says:

The message of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece refers to the Basis of the World Council of Churches, that is the article of our Constitution which says: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour". This Basis was taken over from the Faith and Order movement. It had been originally formulated by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA at its convention in 1910. The invitations to the World Conferences on Faith and Order at Lausanne and Edinburgh were issued on this basis. The only churches which declined the invitation because they found this basis unacceptable were churches taking a unitarian standpoint.

The Evanston Assembly adopted a statement on the nature and function of the Basis (Official Report p. 306) which states specifically: "By joining together, the churches seek to respond to the call and action of their Divine Lord. The World Council must therefore consist of churches which acknowledge that Lord as the second person of the Trinity".

It is therefore clear that the statement that the Holy Trinity is not mentioned in the Basis of the World Council of Churches with the thought to draw in the Anti-Trinitarians is based on a grave misapprehension. EPS, Geneva

Mixed Marriages Frowned on in Germany

(Cleves, Germany) - The local Cleves synod of the Rhineland Church has struck a fresh blow in the "battle over mixed marriages" in Germany by warning Protestants that mixed marriages might bring them under church discipline. (See EPS No. 23)

In resolutions dealing with the subject, the synod says that marrying Roman Catholics or bringing up children of mixed marriages in the Catholic Church are offences under the church discipline and can be followed by exclusion from Holy Communion and loss of church-membership rights.

Declaring that Protestants who marry Catholics are not bound to keep promises given to Catholic priests that their children will be brought up as Catholics, the synod decided to recommend tightening up the marriage regulations of the Rhineland Church as a whole. EPS, Geneva

Rumanian Orthodox Patriarch Arrested

(Vienna) - According to reports received in Vienna from United Press International, Marina Justinian, Patriarch of the Rumanian Orthodox Church, has been put under house arrest by Communist police.

Reports say that the Patriarch has been taken from his Bucharest residence to an undisclosed province and is being watched by special policemen. EPS, Geneva

French Pastors Back from Hungary

(Paris) - The president and general secretary of the French Reformed Church, Pastor Bourguet and Pastor Paul Conord, have reported on a visit to Budapest, Györ, Papa, Debreczen, Miskolc and Dyosgyöri.

The visitors preached and addressed meetings of ministers and students. They saw Bishop Lajos Vető of the Lutheran Church and Bishop Albert Berecsky, Reformed. Official calls were made on the Reformed Church's General Convent office and the president of the state Office of Church Affairs.

The French Reformed church leaders said that "traditional links between the Reformed Churches of France and Hungary were strengthened" and that the journey "would contribute to the development of exchanges between them, (specially in theological studies". EPS, Geneva

In Brief

Mr. Premanand Mahanty, chairman of the Council of the United Bible Societies, died suddenly on November 29. A former principal of St. John's College in Calcutta, at the time of his death he was president of Serampore College. Mr. Mahanty, who became general secretary of the Bible Society of India and Ceylon in 1949, was the first Indian to hold that post.

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On December 2 the British and Foreign Bible Society published a new edition of the Hebrew Old Testament, replacing the former Letteris version, first printed in Vienna for the society 92 years ago. It is edited by Dr. Norman H. Snaith, principal of Wesley College, Leeds, England, and is based on an independent study of all the available manuscripts.

* *

Archbishop Christopher of Tirana and Durazzo, head of the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania, has died of a cerebral haemorrhage. He was 76. In 1949 the Albanian Communist government forced the Archbishop to leave his See. He was confined in the monastery of Ardeniza and later transferred to Tirana, where he died.

* *

Dr. Andrew Thakur Das, executive secretary of the National Christian Council of West Pakistan, has been named regional secretary for the Cameroons, Spanish Guinea, Ethiopia and the Sudan for the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. Dr. Thakur Das, who is a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, will leave Pakistan on January 1 to visit Africa.

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A \$175,000 interracial centre will be built in Dar Es Salaam, the capital of Tanganyika, East Africa, according to action taken by the executive committee of the National Lutheran Council at its bi-annual meeting in Chicago. Africans and whites will be able to meet, sleep and eat under one roof without discrimination in the centre. The committee also appropriated \$100,000 annually for three years for the proposed new short-wave radio station to be erected at a site still to be chosen in Africa, under the auspices of the Lutheran World Federation.

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Archbishop Boris, Exarch for North America and the Aleutian Islands of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, has arrived in the United States for a three month visit to parishes belonging to the Patriarchal Russian Orthodox Church in North America. Most of the Russian Orthodox in the United States are organized in the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America, which, as an autonomous church, does not come under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.

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A memorial church has been dedicated to the victims of the Mau-Mau terrorists at Fort Hall in the British colony of Kenya. A young Kenya artist has decorated the walls of the church with paintings depicting the life of Christ with a Kikuyu landscape in the background.

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The Gereformeerde Church in the Netherlands has appointed a study commission to report on implications of the plan to unify the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches. The church participates in the work of the IMC but does not belong to the WCC.

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A united communion service was held on December 7 in the "Old Church" at Amsterdam as a symbol of the agreement concluded on October 1 between the Lutheran and Netherlands Reformed Churches. The agreement provides for intercommunion between the two churches and for preaching in one another's pulpits.

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The Bishop of Barking, the Rt. Rev. H.R. Gough, has been named the seventh Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, succeeding the late Dr. H.W.K. Mowll. (See EPS No. 40)

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Norway is considering running a Kirchentag modelled on the big German lay rally. A committee in Oslo is charged with preparing a Norwegian Day and working out a programme that will fit in with the structure of the Norwegian Church.

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In the autumn of 1959, young men and women in Austria will be able to give a year's voluntary service in institutions run by the Protestant Church. Similar plans are used in Germany, Holland and Switzerland.

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Protestants in the Rhineland report that the Roman Catholic Church's attitude toward mixed marriages has resulted in an increasing number of couples being married in Protestant churches. (See page 5)

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A group of young Soviet workers will be invited to visit West Germany by the YMCA so that they can study social conditions there.

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Pastor Bernhard Brinksmeier of Teuchern has been released from prison in East Germany (DDR), before his sentence had expired. He was arrested on May 3, 1958, for "calumny against the State" and sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. Thirty churchmen are still in prison in the German Democratic Republic.

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The General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church has decided to send missionaries to Moslem areas in Africa and the Netherlands missions of the Gereformeerde Church are investigating missionary prospects in Argentina and Brazil. The development follows return of Dutch missionaries from Indonesia, where the churches are increasingly doing their own missionary work.

EPS, Geneva

A Special Report

"Old Believer" Russians Resettled in Brazil by WCC

After years of negotiations on their behalf with governments and intergovernmental agencies, over 500 Old Believers, members of a Russian Orthodox agriculturist group, are moving into homes they have built and planting crops on a 6,000-acre tract of land in the state of Parana, Brazil, where they have been resettled through the World Council of Churches.

This major development in Parana, on land which has never been ploughed before, has become a "tourist attraction" in southern Brazil. Every Sunday, interested neighbours and visitors drive up in cars, station wagons, trucks and dozens of horse carts to see the bearded, picturesquely costumed farmers who hold to their ancient beliefs and customs.

The Old Believers left Russia in 1919 and 1920. They settled in a remote area in the north of China and farmed there until 1947 when Soviet authorities came and deported to Russia many of the men of the group. In 1951 and 1952 the Chinese seized their small farms. Then the families turned to the World Council for help to leave China and emigrate to South America.

The Russians began to arrive in Brazil in May. By August, all the present group had arrived. Still hoping to come are another 200 members of the Orthodox group, remaining in Manchuria.

The group has split up into three separate settlements, each with 20 to 30 families in it, headed by a "leader" who will become the mayor as soon as the formalities now under way with the Parana government have been completed to register and name each separate township. Most of the settlers have moved into permanent homes which they have built, leaving shacks which housed them temporarily for use as "summer kitchens".

Ploughing, with the help of two rented tractors and two provided by the WCC, is going on 24 hours a day and three of the Old Believer settlers have become skilled in the operation of the machines. On Saturday afternoons, Old Believer tractor drivers from the villages meet for instruction in maintenance and handling the tractors from the WCC's driver, Otto Hamisch, himself a WCC colonist from Contenda.

In each village the leader's house was the first one completed. In each case, he turned it into a church, decorated with ancient icons and books containing texts copied by the Old Believers. Later, when money is available, churches will be built.

Money to Move 12,000 Europeans from China Needed

But the problem of the Old Believers, which is now at least partially solved, is only a part of the total problem of European refugees in China, still waiting for a solution.

For the first time, numbers of people have visas and the possibility of exit permits from China and have opportunities for settlement overseas "and there is not enough money to move them". There are about ten to twelve thousand Europeans in China awaiting resettlement overseas and for many of them, "it has become a life and death matter". Many, refugee officials point out, are faced with the likelihood of privation and even danger if the governments of the West do not provide the necessary funds (about \$4,000,000) to move them.

Speaking at a recent press conference in Geneva, Service to Refugees director of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Edgar Chandler said "we are challenging the world to help these people who have fled Communism twice". The United Kingdom has announced that it will provide 114 aeroplane seats to transport European refugees now waiting in Hong Kong.

A plane carrying 61 Russians from Hong Kong to homes for the aged and sick in seven European countries, landed in Geneva on December 6. Other planes are scheduled for December 18 and January 4.

At the same time, it has been announced that a group of a thousand Europeans waiting in Shanghai has been moved to Hong Kong by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration. EPS, Geneva

Periodical:THE STUDENT WORLD

The last issue for 1958 of The Student World, magazine of the World's Student Christian Federation, is the second in a series on "Christianity and the Faiths of Modern Man" and is entitled "Christianity and Ancient Religions". The introductory article on "Christianity and Religion" by Professor Enkichi Kan of Japan, is followed by one on "The Problem of Indigenization of Christian Theology in Asia" by Professor J.R. Chandran, of India. Professor Sankaranarayanan of Vivekananda College, Madras, has written on "Hinduism and Its Attitude to Christianity", and two leaders of the Indian SCM describe "Christian Witness among Hindu Students". There are also articles on "The Significance of Spiritualism in Latin America" by Professor Maurer of Brazil, and "Christianity and African Faiths and Beliefs" by Bola Ige of Nigeria. Subsequent issues of The Student World will deal with Buddhism, Islam and Judaism.

The Student World Chronicle includes an article by Bishop K.H. Ting of China on "Christian Theism", one commemorating the centennial of the United States Student YMCA, and a tribute to the late Conrad Hoffmann, a former leader of the WSCF. There are also the usual travel diaries and book reviews.

EPS, Geneva

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